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A Story of Egypt

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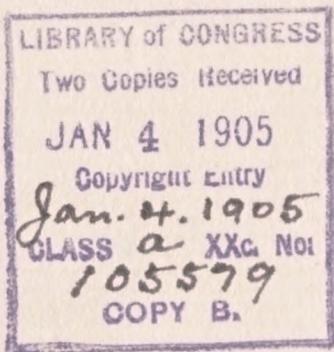
LAURA DAYTON FESSENDEN

Author of "A Colonial Dame," "Bonnie MacKirby,"
"The Moon Children," Etc.



CHRISTMAS
1904

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By LAURA DAYTON FESSENDEN

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The Canterbury Press, Highland Park (Chicago), Illinois

I dedicate
this
Story of Egypt
to
My Dearest and Best Friend
My Husband

LAURA DAYTON FESSENDEN
Highland Park, Illinois

“Happiegoluckie”
Christmas, 1904

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

The fifth day of the first month of summer had come, and in a sunset of gold and purple hues, the Nile was glorified; birds had ceased their songs, the air was heavy with the perfume of flowers, and away to the westward the evening star was setting.

Here, and there, along the shore, lithe, tawney-skinned girls filled earthen jars with water, then lifted them to their shoulders, and walked across the greenness, into the deepening night.

On this delta—or plain—of lower Egypt, there stood, three thousand years ago, the city of Abydos; it measured ten square miles in circumference, and was shut in on three sides, by walls of reddish sand-stone and the unwalled side—fronting the Nile—was a pleasure ground, belonging to a Royal residence and named, the “Palace of Tears,” so called because it was occupied by the King or his family only during seasons of personal, or national distress. Entrance into Abydos, was obtainable through three gateways, and over each there were towers, in which night and day, year in, and year out, the priests of Osirus, kept watch and ward with much fasting and many prayers.

Hatsu

The word “SILENCE” was cut into the stone arch above each gate, and within the city, conversation was carried on in whispers; no sound of instruments of music, no peal of bells, was ever heard, only the lowing of cattle in the Royal meadows, and the bellowing of sacred bulls, in the temple grounds, only the singing of birds among the trees, and the never ceasing chant of the priests broke the stillness.

The reason the city of Abydos was so sanctified a spot was because it was believed to be the resting place of all that had once been mortal of the Man-GOD, Osirus.

On this summer night three thousand years ago, in the Palace of Tears, Tothmes the First, of Egypt, lay dying.

He had been a wise ruler, an able statesman, a brave and successful soldier. Under his guidance and supervision, architecture in Egypt had progressed, many new temples had been built, many ancient ruins restored.

At Memphis he had erected a grand palace, and in the same city had beautified the temple of Ammon; but the greatest act of his reign, was the taking down, of the barriers, that had isolated Egypt from the world, beyond its borders, for ten centuries of time; the only blot on this King's life page was the enslavement of the Israelites, in a bitter and cruel bondage.

Hatsu

Now, this great ruler lay upon his golden couch in an upper room in the Palace of Tears, waiting, in perfect consciousness, for the end.

It was his wish that in his last hour, all should leave him, save his daughter, the Princess Hatsu, an olive-skinned, dark-eyed girl, who lay sobbing upon his breast.

All sense of pain had left the once tortured body of the King, and a peace, like that of the twilight without, had fallen upon him.

One hand cold with the damps of departing life was slowly and tenderly caressing the long braids of the girl's dark hair.

"Hatsu," said the King, "do not cry any more, all the tears of Egypt, all the prayers of her priests avail not to stay this life of mine. Child, it matters not whether that which we call *breath*, is lodged under a King's robe, or a beggar's rags, at the bidding of some almighty power, it comes forth and goes its way into the *unknown*. Hatsu, the call has come to me, and I would fain be gone. I only linger to gain the promise that you will wed Tothmes the Second, for, full well I know, that, when your brother sits upon the throne, his mother,—standing behind the chair of state,—will speak her wish, through his poor faltering lips; full well I know that she will so guide and counsel her son that worse than sorrow may come to be your portion, because

Hatsu

you will not become wife to the Prince—your brother. Child, how can I meet in some beyond the young mother who gave her life for yours, and to her question, ‘Is it well with my babe?’ make answer ‘nay.’ ”

The girl raised herself with a slowness that showed how weak and spent she was; she unknit her fingers from those of the King, and rose and stood before him.

“Father,” she said, “the promise you ask holds more of torture for my woman’s soul than you with your man’s nature can know, yet I defy your will no longer. I give you promise to wed Tothmes the Second.”

The King, with a mighty effort, raised himself to a sitting posture, his face was pinched and ghastly pale, his eyes gleamed with an unnatural light as he gasped, “Down upon your knees, girl, and repeat slowly and distinctly, that I may miss no word, the *‘oath prayer.’* Quick! girl, quick! ”

She knelt at his bidding and slowly and quietly said these words:

“O Thou Beneficent One!

“Protector of life!

“Thou to whom we flee for succor, when earth’s tempests lower, or when death draws near.

“To Thee, Great Principal, our Sun, our Moon, our Star.

Hatsu

“To Thee, the guide of all who pass into the realms of shade, I call. Elder brother, Thou who having once been man and endured like us life's temptations. Thou knowest our infirmities, and can therefore with divine compassion forgive our proneness to err.

“O, Osirus, Thou that shall judge us at the last day, and with infinite tenderness, shield us from Seth and his geni, when they strive to prove before the great tribunal, the unfitness of a world soul, for the realms of bliss.

“O, Osiris, I swear to Thee, to obey the will of my father the King.”

Like a falcon, that needs but the loosing of the silken thread, that it may lift its wings and mount into the blue, the soul of Tothmes the First, upon the promise of his child, soared upward, and was not; and her cry of anguish told to those who stood without that the time had come in which to proclaim the reign of Tothmes the Second.

Hatsu

CHAPTER II.

The seventy-two days of mourning for the dead had been accomplished, the oblations and purifications of the living had been performed.

Again it was night in the Palace of Tears.

The ladies-in-waiting upon the Princess Hatsu were weary of the funeral pomp and circumstance by which they had been for so many weeks environed, and one and all hailed with delight the prospect of beginning on the morrow, the journey back to Thebes, where their royal mistress was to wed the now reigning King of Egypt.

So they had happy thoughts, as they silently regarded Her Highness, who, with her favorite serving maid, standing behind her chair, sat by one of the narrow windows, her arm upon the sill, her hand forming a rest for her face, as she looked out on the river and the palace garden, bathed in the splendor of a full moon's light.

The maid behind the Princess' chair was a girl whose appearance was in marked contrast, through its race characteristics, to the other women present. Her skin, unlike the Egyptian ladies', was devoid of yellow tinting, and its whiteness was the more marked because of the faint rose bloom on cheek

Hatsu

and lip. Her hair, rippling on either side of her broad brow, was brown in color, and its two heavy braids fell to the hem of her gown.

Her large blue eyes were shaded by long golden brown lashes; her eyebrows, strongly arched, were black.

When she smiled, a little dimple played at hide-and-seek in one of the rounded cheeks and there was a shimmer of pearls between the rosy lips.

The ladies-in-waiting upon the Princess Hatsu were all daughters of high priests, for the priesthood of Egypt represented, with the military officials, the gentry of Mizram. The function of priesthood was not confined exclusively to ecclesiastic thought; it embraced beside theology the professions of law, medicine, science, philosophy, poetry, and history, so it is easily seen that an intellectual, rather than a so-called spiritual condition was the priestly requirement.

There was no such thing in Egypt as succession from father to son. Outside the office of kingship itself, *knowledge* was the power, through which one and all must mount to distinction; education was a free gift to the people, irrespective of caste, and the child of the humblest pilot or artisan of to-day, might, through the force of his mentality, be the priestly or military influence behind a to-morrow's throne.

Hatsu

Each *Nome*—or *State*—in Egypt had its High Priest or Governor; to him was entrusted the control of the industries of his province—the granaries, the garden produce, and all manufactured articles; and to him came the rentals of public lands and houses that had been dedicated by the kingdom or given by private individuals for the service of some particular god or goddess.

Celebacy in the priesthood was discouraged in Egypt. The number of children gathered about hearthstone was a matter for pride and thanksgiving, the lack of such treasures always a cause for sorrow and shame.

Now these ladies-in-waiting (or if you will, maids-of-honor) to the Princess Hatsu, came from the forty-nine states of the kingdom, their homes were scattered from one end of Egypt to the other and their fathers were devoted to one of the various intellectual callings that have been mentioned. These girls represented many distinctive mental types, and as for religious belief, what one thought spiritually in Egypt was a matter of individual choice, and it is not at all improbable that the forty-nine high priests (represented in the Princess' household by their daughters) served forty-nine distinctive ideals of Deity and were in their theological views as diametrically opposed as are the various sects and schisms of our day.

Hatsu

Then as regarded the manner and speech of these girls one could tell by their pronunciation whether they came from Mazor—lower Egypt—or Pathos—upper Egypt; but there was a sameness about their appearance; they all had round voluptuous figures, small, well-shaped noses, long gray eyes, full red lips, and smooth hair, which—to meet a prevailing fashion—was dyed a dark blue.

It had been the pleasure of Tothmes the First to give to his daughter only that which should charm her eye, and please her senses, so the maidens that the King had selected to bear the Princess company were endowed with beauty, wit, and all womanly graces and accomplishments; yet for them one and all Hatsu felt but a kindly friendship; her heart's love she gave to Miriam, her maid—Miriam, daughter of Abram, the Israelite, Abram the skilled architect, into whose hands the late King had given the planning and construction of the third pyramid.

Had Miriam been a free woman, this fondness of the Princess for her might have caused a feeling of envy in the breasts of the ladies-in-waiting; but what did it signify—how Hatsu treated the girl who plaited her hair? Miriam was a slave! * * * It was a long and a silent service, that the ladies-in-waiting had kept this night, but at last the Princess lifted her face from her hands and turned toward her attendants.

Hatsu

"I fear," she said, "that I am but a poor companion, and I will not weary you with longer waiting. The night is young, the gardens below are beautiful in the moonlight, go and enjoy them for the last time."

Then the girls arose, and stepping backwards, curtseyed themselves out of the apartment, the last one closing the door softly behind her. When the sound of their footsteps had died away the Princess spoke.

"Come, my Miriam," she said, "and take this seat beside me, wind your arm about my waist, and I will lay my head against your breast, and we will talk to one another. I have been looking at the Sphinx down yonder. For untold generations she has been asking her unsolvable riddle, 'Whence are we? whither do we go?' Night after night I have sat here and made inarticulate cry to the beautiful raised head, gazing with expectant eyes toward the west, until at last she seemed to say to my soul, 'Sister woman, there is no *god*, but fate, and *time*—the present *time*—is **ALWAYS** his prophet.'

"If this be so, what need of losing breath in prayer? what need of so-called conscience, tell me, Miriam, may I not without fear of the wrath of an avenging God, break the vow I made to my father the King? and with your aid (and another's) escape

Hatsu

from out the city to-night and so save myself from the living death that awaits me in Thebes?"

"Hatsu, beloved," said Miriam gently (for so it was the will of the Princess that she should be addressed by Miriam when alone) "the great stone image on the plain is naught but the work of man! It has no life, save in the superstitious fancy of a priest-ridden nation! Hatsu, there *is* above, about, and around us, an eternal force, and it created that which we call humanity. We of Israel call this force '*God*'—the '*All Father*'—and '*Jehovah*', and though our bondage under Egypt's yoke seems to human understanding intolerable, we feel spiritually that we are the children of this King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We understand that when His wise purpose is fulfilled, we shall bless this providence, of chains, and scourgings, and burdens, as a lesson of love, and mercy, making us the more worthy of our inheritance in the promised land."

The Princess raised her head and listened in silence until Miriam had ceased to speak. "Your words are pretty," she said with a sigh, "they soothe one like the crooning of a lullabye, and believing it, as you do, must be to you a great consolation, but to me, dear Miriam, it is all delusion, and emptiness! I have read much of theology, and have longed to cultivate faith, but to me all forms of religion seem phantom things, elusive, and delusive;

Hatsu

they are assertions of Deity, founded upon legends, and then reared, by unreasoning superstition, through countless generations of men! do not shake your pretty head, Miriam, for I know whereof I speak, and I this day have cast my praying beads aside as worthless toys! while all my thoughts, hopes, and fears, are gathered about the awful fact of that near-at-hand wedding day. The time has come when, if I am to keep the pledge made to my dying father, I must lay aside these garments of sorrow, and don the bridal robe and crown. Tomorrow we leave the blessed quiet of this place to journey back to Thebes, and there I shall wed that grawsome creature that reigns in my father's place! Small comfort do I take in the knowledge that my witless brother has been new calendared among Egypt's saints! So do they make gods of many noxious beasts and vipers! Tell me, Miriam, could any merciful force, anything with even finest human intelligence doom a maiden to link herself with yonder living, breathing mass of nothingness? My husband, that is to be, clings to the toys of his earliest childhood, merrily jingles his rattle and bells, and is soothed to sleep by the crooning of nursery rhyme! Tothmes the Second a saint! Tothmes the Second a King! There is no God! There is no unseen power! We are creatures of the dust, ruled by *creed and greed!* See, Miriam, no fire from the

Hatsu

Heaven you prate of consumes me for this uttered sacrilege! My heart beats on! My breath comes and goes, as I look up to the star-spangled sky and speak my mind! But, O Miriam, Miriam, is there nothing that can save me?" The Princess had arisen, in her agony, and she now flung herself upon the ground, burying her face in Miriam's lap.

For a moment there was silence, and then Miriam spoke.

"Hatsu, beloved," she said, "the path marked out for you to tread seems a dark and thorny one. I would that I could scatter rose leaves upon it or lift its gloom, but I can only read from one life guide, and in all its pages I see the word "obedience." Our God hath said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land,' therefore, dear and honored mistress, cease to struggle against that which you have vowed beside your father's dying bed to perform, and, in the midst of your present despair let this thought comfort you, our sojourn on this planet, that men call the Earth, is but for a moment of time; this will lead you to believe that in some better sphere, you will look back to see that *yesterday's sorrows* were but mists and nothing more. Think not of yourself, dear lady, but of your land, of Egypt. *She* has need of you upon her throne. Your people love and trust you. Can you then subject them to a rule so terrible as

Hatsu

would surely befall should the mother of Tothmes the Second have power to guide the State? Live for your people, Hatsu, and leave your present and your future in the hands of the One God; call Him if you will Osirus, for any name we call (if we call with reverent spirit) the Supreme Ruler will answer to."

The Princess raised her head and looked into Miriam's eyes.

"Dear Miriam," she said, "I have no faith to offer to Deity; have I not prayed and fasted through these days of mourning? and has help come? No, but rather with each new hour I have felt the meshes of the net more tightly drawn about me! And always night and day I see this picture. A girl stands before me. She wears upon her head a heavy golden crown. Its frontlet is an Eagle—the emblem of power, strength, and freedom; the Eagle's wings are wide spread; the bird glitters with gems—oh, how they shine!—but they are above eyes that fain would weep, yet dare not; they are above a heart that *must* not break! The girl's garment is of cloth of gold, and her long braids are entwined with pearls; her sandaled feet glimmer like frost in the sunshine; on her arms, about her throat, and in her ears, diamonds glisten, and as she stands upon a carpet of freshly gathered flowers, she is a *priceless gift* to the *King, her husband* that is to be; but under this

Hatsu

mask of silk, and gold, and gem, I see a degraded womanhood! the girl is spiritually bound by something stronger than captive chains; oh, Miriam," she cried, springing to her feet, "There are no *Gods*! there is no *one* God! Nay! do not speak, but listen! I have from babyhood served the Gods of my people! I have with my own hands fed the sacred beasts and birds in the Temple. I have dedicated every heliotrope in all the palace gardens to Osirus, and what is my reward? I am to be mated to deformity of mind and body! A deformity that so disgraces the name of man that his coming shadow makes the bravest shudder! His touch is like leprosy! His caresses will be Hell. Oh, that the God you worship would hear my cry for escape! Pray to Him, Miriam, and may-hap, through your faith, in this eleventh hour, there *will* be found a city of refuge for me."

Even as the Princess spoke these words, there came a strong tap upon the door, and in an instant she had resumed her seat, and Miriam her place, behind her mistress' chair.

Then, at the bidding of Hatsu, the door swung back, and two by two, there entered a company of youths, each bearing golden lamps.

Following the youths came a man, holding a golden salver, on which lay a small parchment scroll. Bowing low (not kneeling), he presented it to the

Hatsu

Princess, who received it and read aloud the contents, in a clear, quiet voice.

“Hatsu, Daughter of our Departed Lord, and King. All Hail! It is the will of the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, Osirus, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that thou (accompanied by thine Israelitish handmaiden, Miriam) follow Alric, the bearer of this scroll, without question, through the Palace of Tears, even down into the subterranean grotto, known to the faithful of Mizram as the labyrinth of Death. At a certain place by the way, at Alrick’s bidding, leave the handmaiden, and the captain of the King’s guards, and take thy way alone, even unto the doorway that opens into the Temple of Osirus in the city of Abydos. Come thither, oh daughter of a great King, wife to be of our sainted Monarch, and on thy lonely way give thy soul into Osirus’ care and keeping. This, O Princess, is the will of Zelas the High Priest.”

When the last word had been read the Princess raised the scroll to her lips, then tying it with the red silken cord, she put it into the bosom of her gown. Raising her gray eyes and looking for the first time at the captain of the King’s guard, she said, slowly and distinctly:

“Lead the way, and Miriam and Hatsu will follow thee.”

Hatsu

CHAPTER III.

Miriam stood watching in silence the form of her mistress the Princess Hatsu until she had disappeared from sight in a curve of the avenue, or path, then she sat herself down upon a stone bench, and with closed eyes and folded hands sent prayers—like white-winged angels—to keep the Princess company.

So earnest was her thought that she had quite forgotten the companionship of the captain of the King's guard, until the sound of his voice called her back to her immediate surroundings.

"She is *indeed* brave of heart is the Princess," said the captain, a ring of enthusiasm sounding through his words. "There are not many women, old or young, that would start on this journey with no consciousness of fear, for, setting all thought of superstition aside, it is a *growsome place*. There is not, I assure you, a foot of the entire way from here to the Temple, that does not afford sepulchre to some lifeless object, once an animated '*I am*,' now a hideous semblance, an ugly jest upon being."

Miriam lifted her great blue eyes to the speaker's face as she said:

"Whatever else you may be, my lord, you are not a worshipper of Osirus, for all his faithful ones

Hatsu

know that nothing is so sacred in his sight as are these embalmed birds, beasts and reptiles."

The man smiled and shrugged his shoulders; he did not seem to consider that any explanation of his recent sacrilege was necessary to an Israelitish slave. This captain of the King's guard was probably well past his thirtieth year, and unlike the majority of Egyptian manhood, he was of athletic proportions; he wore upon his feet and legs, sandals and leggins of scarlet leather. The leggins were cut into numberless thongs or strips, and each one was fastened in place by a gold and jeweled buckle. His tunic, or loosely flowing frock, was of white linen exquisitely embroidered with colored flosses, to represent leaves and blossoms; at his shoulders the tunic was gathered up with broad clasps of diamonds. About his throat was a collar of diamonds, with pendant strings, that fell, like threads of shimmering light, to his broad breast. His arms were bare, save for the jeweled bracelets or coils that serpent-like twined from wrist to armpit and looked like part of a coat of mail. His hair was worn in short curly waves about his forehead and the sides of his fair smoothly shaven face, then, its curly brown profusion, fell from the back, far below his waist. Full well Miriam knew this handsome gallant captain of the King's guards, and heretofore (for reasons best known to herself) she had held him in honor as

Hatsu

one who was her mistress' trusted and loyal servant; but to-day, in her loving anxiety for the Princess, the thought came to her that it would be best to guard her speech, for how (she reasoned) could she tell but that the Queen Regent, the mother of King Tothmes the Second, might not have sent the Captain to spy upon her mistress? Miriam was a wise maiden, she had been taught life's lessons in the school of adversity and she had come to know, through bitter experience, that he who listens has less to fear than he who talks. So she said gently:

“ My lord, it is not courteous to be mirthful or scornful over that which the King you serve holds so sacred,” and she pointed to the niched wall where, in gaudily painted wooden cases, the faces of cats, birds, and other creatures of the animal kingdom, grinning of jaw and glassy of eye, looked down upon them.

“ Perhaps,” replied the captain, “ if you, my pretty Miriam, had been selected to go from one end of the kingdom to the other to act as escort to dead cats, and dogs, oxen, and birds, and so bring them to this their final resting place, perhaps, I say, if you had been selected and then detailed to instruct the natives as to the salting and other disgusting mortuary preparations, you would have come in time to regard these things as I do, as only powerful through their offensiveness to one's nostrils! as only

Hatsu

capable of working harm, when as decaying animal matter they are allowed to pollute the otherwise pure atmosphere."

"I do not understand how you dare to say all this to me, my lord," said Miriam, "for unbelievers though we be, you, a Syrian, I an Israelite, we are now in the most sacred sepulchre of Osirus. We both know what the speaking ill of a living sacred animal may cost. We know what the wilful killing of any of these forms of life means for him who does the deed. How often have you and I, suddenly coming by the way upon some dead thing, fallen upon our knees and plucked from out our heads a few hairs to propitiate the anger of Deity?"

"My charming Israelite," said the captain drawing a trifle nearer, "as you know full well, I have been reared from youth up in the household of Zelas the High Priest of Osirus. Let me confide to you that I, Alric, look into this great man's face as fearlessly as does the babe upon its mother! Aye, oftentimes I sit smiling in my content, while close at hand the awful voice of Zelas is heard, hurling anathemas upon the unfaithful as generously as a rose tree sheds its leaves when a breeze woos too roughly. This being so, do you fancy that these dried, glassy-eyed puppets mean anything to me but what they are? Then, as to my speaking openly to you, pray, who is there to hear my words? The folk

Hatsu

in yonder palace would far rather accept an invitation to *Troths* kingdom than set so much as one foot upon this subterranean path. As for the priests, they hold the place in such superstitious horror that when they are forced to come thither they appear in great companies, singing at the top of their voices (which, of course, would give one an intimation of their proximity long before they themselves could appear). And now let me tell you a bit of pleasant news. The Princess Hatsu, through, and by this pilgrimage of hers, is going to inspire in her people an awesome reverence that shall exalt her to a godliness far beyond that bestowed upon the idiot, her husband (that is to be), aye, even as I speak, by the command of Zelas, the news of this journey of the Princess (our future Queen) is being shouted through the land by mounted heralds, and everywhere prayers are offered for the preservation of the body and soul of this brave girl, that she may come through the awful, supernatural test, unconsumed; for you must know that it is usually believed that this cool and sequestered labyrinth is torrid in its temperature and holds many, if not all, the terrors and tortures, that meet and greet the human soul when a life on earth is past."

"But, my lord, what will all this avail? The mother of our new King holds the controlling power in the councils of state, and well you know, she has

Hatsu

for our late King's daughter a bitter and relentless hate."

My lord Alric studied the smoothly worn stone path under foot, pushing with the toe of his sandal some imaginary straw aside, ere he made answer.

"Our Sainted King's most noble and gracious mother hath become (so saith the all-wise High Priest Zelas) too sacred a thing to be put in daily and hourly contact with the naughty world. Be it known to you, O Miriam, that the mother of Tothmes the Second will hereafter be powerless to do aught but pray, since she has this day been received into the cloistered nunnery of the Sisterhood of Perpetual Silence."

"To our One God, Jehovah, I offer my thanks," said Miriam fervently, "but, my lord, do you not fear to speak thus openly to me, for it must surely be known to you that from my mistress I will keep no word?"

"For that matter," answered Alric lightly, "you and I have but one life purpose. I, *too*, keep nothing concealed from the Princess Hatsu. Listen, I will unfold to you now more serious matters. I, Alric, hold the peace, the happiness, the life of the Princess Hatsu in my power, and for my service the price I ask shall be one gift—I want Miriam, the daughter of Abram to wife."

With a cry, Miriam rose to her feet and stood

Hatsu

before Alric, moved (she did not question why) by an anger quite unknown to her in any hour of her past life.

“Spy! Coward!!” she said, her pink cheeks flamed to a deep red, her eyes blazed with scorn, and her splendid figure seemed as fixed as a graven image. “You shall find that for all your cunning there will open for you *no vulnerable place* in the armor of my loyalty to my mistress! Aye, all your brutal showing of your freeman’s power over my bondage and my woman’s weakness cannot reach my SOUL! I, Miriam, *defy* you to gain from me in the future one word I do not choose to speak. Let the Princess make a free gift of her bondwoman! *to you!* and I must submit to the inevitable, but mark me, no word that the Princess ever has *said*, or will *say*, shall come *to you* through me! and every word that *you* have *said* or *will say* shall be whispered into her ear. My Lord Alric, in my young childhood the late King took me from among mine own people to be the companion of his daughter. He gave to my father a place of honor and trust among the builders, and the Princess has cherished me with sisterly tenderness. If you will that I die for it here at your feet, still I *swear* not to become your *tool*, even though I be your *slave*, aye, to my God I *swear it!*”

The Captain had moved a pace or two back from

Hatsu

Miriam as she spoke, and as he listened to her every word he put one of his hands into the folds of his toga and drew from thence a small disk of glass. He never took his eyes from Miriam's eyes; his gaze was fixed, and intense, and as she had gone on with her speech, it was perceptible that all unconsciously a subtle power was weaving itself about her. A sense, not of faintness, but rather of pleasant numbness stole slowly and softly over Miriam, mind and nerves, and a sweet peace that stayed the angry torrent of her blood, and brought a smile to her lips came, when she heard (as in a dream) these words.

"By my shield and buckler, by my good sword, I swear to you, that I am loyal to the Princess Hatsu."

A change was passing over the girl's face. She still stood before him, erect, and calm, but expression was fading out. The look that the dead wear was with her. Her color had fled, giving place to ashen wanness, and the light in her beautiful eyes was dimmed. Her mouth grew set, her nostrils pinched, and her breathing came in great waves of effort. Alrick now raised his other hand and moved it to and fro above the girl's head, to a sort of measured time, repeating slowly, crooningly, and softly:

Hatsu

“ Go to sleep!
G-o t-o s-l-e-e-p.
G—o t—o s—l—e—e—p.”

Then he lowered the hand above her, gently pushed her back onto the stone bench from which she had risen, and rested her rigid head against the wall.

Then it was that her sob-like breathing ceased and, save that her eyes were widely open and staring, one would have said that Miriam had found her way into slumberland.

Keeping the disk of glass before her eyes, Alric spoke:

“ Spirit,” he said softly, “ spirit, what dost thou here? ”

And from the white lips came the answer:

“ I wait to do thy bidding, my Lord.”

Hatsu

CHAPTER IV.

“Spirit,” he said, “give me the name of thy master.”

“My earthly master,” she made answer, “is one Alric, the grandson of Emil, who was called the wise man of Damascus.”

“It is well, oh spirit. And although now, thou dost abide in a clay tenement, that the humanity of this generation, name Miriam, the Israelitish maiden, I know full well that thou, the soul, the life principal, can in memory go so far back, through eons of time, that its mention would be meaningless to the world of to-day; yet, because thou hast responded to my power, I know, oh spirit, that we have met before, that we came close in love, or hate, and that in the evolution of law, and order, we have met again. Tell me of that time. Speak of our past, oh spirit, it is my will.”

“My name was Gweneth,” answered a voice (that was not Miriam’s voice at all). “In that fleshly captivity I abode far to the westward. My land was over many leagues of immeasurable water. The nation, powerful then, is forgotten; its people are dust; its cities buried in the bowels of the earth.

“You were my father’s favorite knight—and his

Hatsu

two daughters loved you; you were bold, and wooed them both in secret, and apart; but one that watched, made speed to tell the King! And it was so grave a crime that naught but life, could be its expiation, and yet, you had said no word; had only looked into her eyes and mine.

“The day of doom came, and all were gathered to see the archer twang his bow, and mark how surely the sharp arrow should find your heart; but they who watched, saw a stranger sight. Behold! one arrow did set free three souls.

“The winds of destiny parted us asunder; and through a dreary, dreary length of time, have I wandered. A myriad times have I been born, and lived, and died, and never in this infinite migration once beheld the soul I sought, until in Egypt’s land, a slave, a bondmaid, I serve my sister now the Princess Hatsu. I kneel, to do the bidding of my father’s knight who is called Alric now.”

“It is well, sweet Gweneth, we are met again. Now tell me all thou dost know concerning the life of Hatsu the Egyptian Princess?”

“Alas, beloved, thou canst gain no secret knowledge concerning the Princess Hatsu from me, for the God to whom Miriam, the Israelitish maiden, prays is mightier than all the gods of Egypt. All thought, beloved, is of the soul, and I, Gweneth,

Hatsu

dare not approach to read what is written in the mind of this Heaven-guarded maid, Miriam."

An exclamation of irritation escaped from Alric's lips; and in that moment Miriam stirred, as one does who is about to awake; but he hastily made some passes above her head with his hand, and once more acknowledging his hypnotic power, she grew still.

"Come, sweet Gweneth," he said gently, "time flies and thou must follow Hatsu on her way. Tell me what thou seest?"

Miriam raised her head, and lifted her arm, placing her hand above her eyes, as one does who peers into the distance.

"She is wending her way along a road," she said, "a narrow road, walled in and lighted by lamps, enclosed in globes of dull red glass, thus giving, if it were possible, a more grawsome effect to the creatures sepulchered there; but Hatsu has no dread, she has been used to count these things when living, as her friends, so she does not fear them dead! Neither does Hatsu's heart tremble, at the thought of meeting the great High Priest, although she knows that no woman has ever before beheld his face. Although she knows that when he ministers to the people, it is always behind the Temple's silken veil."

Hatsu

“ It is truth that thou speaketh, fair spirit, so lead on.”

“ She is pausing,” said Miriam, “ for there has come to her ears the sound of voices. They the voices of a great company of priests, and they are repeating in low, even tones the prayers for the dead. She has prostrated herself upon the earth, and the priests forming in two lines, walk past her, swinging their golden censers right and left, and I can hear the voice of the Princess, joining in the petition, for the soul of her father—still on its journey to the kingdom that lies beyond the tomb. Now the sound of the singing grows fainter, the silence comes again, and Hatsu rises and goes on her way. She has reached a flight of broad stone steps. She is weary and the steps are many, but she presses on. She has reached the great door. She timidly touches it with her finger tips, but it swings noiselessly open, and she enters and finds herself within the temple.”

“ Tell me of this temple.”

“ It is a great hall, lofty and spacious, and it shines from floor to dome, with gold and silver and jewels. Panels of delicate yellow amber, give a satin-like touch of softness to the cold stone. The recesses that hold the cages of the sacred birds and beasts, are veiled by curtains of heavily embroidered silken stuffs, and all this splendor is added to by the

Hatsu

brilliant lights that are set into the walls. Through the centre of the temple, and at intervals along its sides, are massive pillars of yellow and rose colored sand-stone. Beyond is the great altar, brilliant with lights, heavy with the fragrance of burning incense and of the sacred blossoms.

“No human thing is in sight. The tame beasts and birds are wandering about the temple. They have noted the Princess’s entrance, and are hastening to surround her.

“Thus accompanied she is nearing the altar.

“The heavy silken curtains are parting, and from between them there comes, not a man! but a god! the Sun God! in man’s stature! He is exceeding tall and lithe and sinewy. He is in the zenith of manhood, neither young nor old.

“His flesh is firm and white and colorless. His eyes are large and bright, and deeply blue, and his hair is as yellow as the sunbeam, and it falls in waves of glory about his shoulders.

His robe of blue and gold, is sprinkled with jewels as the dew sprinkles the green sward in the early morning time. He speaks, and his voice is like the tenderest note of music.

“‘Hatsu,’ he says; ‘Hatsu.’ And the birds at the sound of his voice fly to him, and nestle against him, as children nestle close to a mother.

“‘Hatsu,’ he says, ‘daughter of Tothmes the

Hatsu

First, draw near without fear, and mount the steps of the altar, and pass under the folds of the divine wings, into the sanctuary—the Holy of the Holies—and be thou not consumed.' With a cry Miriam rose and stretched out her arms.

" 'God of my fathers,' she wailed. 'Save her! save Hatsu! Let no vengeance from any heathen god fall upon her, because in the madness of her grief, she has said defiant words! Stay their power, oh God, to turn Egypt's hope into the semblance of some defiled beast or bird.'

" She will not ask mercy from them, my strong, proud Princess! She knows not what fear may mean! Her eyes are calm, her lips are parted in a quiet smile; no fate can daunt her!

" As I speak, lo! following the Sun God, she has passed through the folds! she stands on the other side of the curtain. It is a bare, plain room. In the centre of the apartment is set a rude table and a few chairs. The man with the golden hair speaks.

" 'Princess,' he says, 'I have bidden that you come thither, that I may speak in your ear, concerning that, which can no longer be cherished by me alone. I am, Princess, Zelas, the High Priest of Osirus.'

" 'I am, at your father's behest, left to guide,

Hatsu

and to guard you, I am left with the power to place you on the throne of Egypt, a virgin queen.

“ Full well our late King knew, that his people could not be ruled over by his eldest son (his sister's child) who has not so much wisdom as yonder gibbering ape, and Ashel, Tothmes the Second's mother, the King had discovered to be a creature of mean cunning, and low covetousness, and he saw in your second brother, an artful and ambitious plotter. Listen, oh Princess, while I rehearse to you the earth story of Tothmes the First. He was a born King, a statesman, and a diplomat, from the earliest day of his reign, Egypt was his constant and absorbing thought, Her power, Her glory, Her advancement, his waking theme.

“ He revolutionized the army, added ships to the depleted squadrons on the sea, enlarged and beautified the temple of Ammon, and built the pyramid of Cheops—thus enabling the Scientists of his day, to bring to a completion, much that had never before been deemed possible of demonstration, in electricity, astronomy, and mathematics.

“ It was at his bidding, that Egypt, after ten centuries of isolation, flung wide her gates, and welcomed to the marts of trade, the commerce of the outer world.

“ He encouraged his people to export all their various manufactured and agricultural products,

Hatsu

urging upon them the wisdom of learning from other nations, all that was best and most progressive in the arts and sciences.

“ Thus it came to pass, that the King took small heed to his personal surroundings.

“ Forced to marry—for state reasons—his own sister, a woman of repulsive appearance, and unlovable character, the domestic ties weighed lightly upon him.

“ Being a scientist, he felt no surprise at the issue of this marriage.

“ He knew that if the mating of near kin, is not thought wise for the horse, and hound, it must perforce prove disastrous, in humankind.

“ The other son—a concubine’s child—was brought into the world in accordance with the wishes of his ministers of state, who trembled at the thought of the idiot prince being sole heir to the kingdom.

“ Thus matters stood, until one day when weary of the affairs of camp, and court, the King disguised his royalty, and wandered incognito through the city of Thebes, and he came at last to the quarter of the market place, set aside for the slave traders and their human merchandise.

“ It was a scene that stirred the great heart with pity!

“ The long, low building formed a square of considerable size, and after mounting a pair of

Hatsu

steps, the King found himself in a hall, around which ran a platform of wood, encompassing every side of the apartment.

“ This platform was divided into pens, shut in by wooden railings, and in these pens were confined human beings who were exposed for sale.

“ These men and women represented life from earliest infancy to infirm age.

“ In color they were from the blackest ebony to the whitest snowdrift.

“ Walking about were merchants, and buyers, loudly commenting upon the occupants of the cages.

“ The black folk for sale, either stared out upon these buyers, and sellers, with a stolid indifference, or with closed eyes, seemed wrapt in total oblivion of their surroundings.

“ The white men, either paced nervously up and down their limited enclosure, or sat looking out, with inquiring eyes, that spoke of a questioning mind.

“ The white women huddled together in groups, with their arms entwined and their faces full of silent sadness.

“ One of the traders approached a cage within which the most highly priced group of the market were confined.

“ He was followed by a portly, unctuous Egyptian, whose best years were behind him, and on

Hatsu

whose bestial face was written the story of sensual indulgence.

“ The merchant unlocked the door of this cage, and entering, selected from among the now pale and trembling group the particular slave that the fat Egyptian had indicated with his forefinger.

“ Roughly seizing her by the arm, the merchant forced her to stand up; then pushing her before him (with no gentle hand) he brought her out of the cage—which he carefully re-locked—and bade her “go to the purchaser.”

“ The fat Egyptian, surveyed the girl, from head to foot, to the accompaniment, of the merchant’s monotonous chanting, of her especial physical charms and at just the right time, in his oration, he placed one of his hands, on the back of the girl’s neck, and with the other he jerked her head to his shoulder, and pried open the beautiful mouth, calling upon the purchaser, to examine the whiteness, and the soundness of her teeth.

“ He next pinched her neck, and her arms, to show the firm quality of the flesh.

“ As the trader drew aside the loose toga of linen, and displayed the small beautiful breast, the Egyptian who had before haggled and hesitated, began to draw out his purse and the girl looking up and seeing the other man—a man in whose eyes

Hatsu

dwelt compassion for her helplessness—said softly the one word “Mercy.”

“Then a courage born of his sheltering presence, came to her, and she removed the pin that held her golden hair and it fell like a mantle of light, all about her.

“The disguised monarch, impelled, by some strange force spoke:

““Stay thy hand oh buyer,” he said. “Thy bargain, is not sealed. *I* bid for this *slave* a thousand more pieces of gold, and I will pay as much *more* for the little lad, from whose arms she was untwined.”

“Whether or not, the Egyptian saw through the king’s disguise none can tell; but with many profound saalams, he expressed his willingness, to yield all *claim*, and making another appointment with the dealer, withdrew, leaving the king alone with the merchant.

““Tell me,” said the King, “of this maiden’s past? Surely so fair a woman was not born for captivity!”

““No my lord,” answered the slave merchant, “none of these of the white skin are born slaves. Our vessels with well-armed crews thread the distant seas and visit remote lands in search of human gems. Our men seek some sequestered spot along the coast, wherein they may hide the ship, then they divide

Hatsu

themselves, into companies, and steal to the main land, and watch about the villages, and towns until the husbands and fathers go off to the chase, or to do battle; then they enter the unprotected settlements, and securing such among the women and the children as seem salable, make off with them. It is a pleasant trade, my lord, and profitable."'"

Hatsu

CHAPTER V.

“‘ That night the white slave slept upon the King of Egypt’s breast and the boy (her brother) the king in his pleasure, made such provision for that he was safe and happy evermore.’ ”

As Miriam repeated these last words, Alric bent close, and his eyes seemed to be striving, to find in her expression some thing that her words did not reveal to him. “ It was a spring song, this last love of Tothmes the First,” went on Miriam, “ for the blossom he had gathered, could not bear the transplanting, even though the garden was the home of a king, and so it came to pass that when her child was born, Grunheld, in a delirium of fever, that followed the hours of pain, talked in the language of a strange people, and one, who stood near—the great physician of the realm, a man versed in many tongues told the King,—that she spoke of an island home, over a great waste of waters, of breeze swept, rain washed hills, and then laying upon the alter, of some unknown God, chaplets of prayer,—the King’s love, passed out of Mizram, and was not.—That she should not, in her journey of three thousand years, be forced to abide in the bodies of bird, beast, or reptile, the King, had her fair form, made ready, for sacred em-

Hatsu

balmment, and while the work progressed, there was no pause for breath, so thick and fast came the prayers, that the long sleep might not be broken.

“And when the body was wrapped, and the priestly office for the dead accomplished, they laid the young stranger, in a rock chamber, and for her comfort, filled the room with all things needful, for a soul’s journey should she by chance (in spite of prayer and charm) awake.

“Then all that human love could do, being accomplished, the King turned him to his motherless child, Hatsu.

“Now from her earliest childhood, the Princess Hatsu was beloved by the people, for in her outward form, she bore no trace of her alien mother’s race; her skin was Egypt’s clear transparent olive, her eyes dark, and languorous, her hair long, smooth, and easily dyed to the royal color.

“But the soul of Hatsu, was the soul of her mother, not proud, and distant, was she, like Egypt’s royal women, but gentle, and kind to all men, reverent to the Gods, and obedient to those in authority.

“So it was not strange that she was beloved save by one, and that one the mother of her half brother the Idiot prince, now, King Tothmes the Second of Egypt.

“The Idiot prince was her devoted slave, following her about like a faithful dog, and only showing

Hatsu

glimmerings of intelligence, when his sister addressed him.

“The other brother,—the concubine’s son,—honored her too—and though selfish and crafty by nature he seemed—and seems to this day—her true and faithful friend.

“This Princess is the story of thy life, until this hour as it is written in the sacred chronicle of our most holy order.”

As Zelas has thus spoken our Princess has drawn nearer, and nearer to his side.

His quiet unmoved voice, has fallen like a benediction of peace upon her troubled heart. Hope is springing anew within her breast, and now that he has ceased, they are looking into each other’s eyes, she kneels at his feet.

“Holy father,” she says. “I come to thee, in this my hour of need for council and guidance. Listen my lord! Standing beside the form of my departing father, I took solemn oath to Osirus to wed Tothmes the Second, to be Egypt’s Queen.

“My Lord, it is said, that the great Osirus, has given to you, the power to read the innermost thoughts of men. If this be true—small need, to tell you that the girl kneeling at your feet would joyfully lay down her young life, and enter the body of the most degraded thing that walks or crawls. Aye that she would rather abide in any evil form, through

Hatsu

every hour of the next three thousand years! than endure one fleeting day, of such life as the coming Queenship implies.

“ My lord, I will speak to you, that which I dare scarce breathe to my own soul. I *know* what it is to love. He, who is dearer to me than aught else in time, or endless eternity hath not a dream, that this is so; but, love like mine, is satisfied with the giving, it asks no more, than just to *love silently* on, to live a *lonely empty life* made fragrant by purity, and sanctified by prayer. Let me, I pray thee, my Lord, be committed to some sisterhood. With thy mighty power save me from the awful doom that Queenship with my brother Tothmes means.”

Miriam stops, she leans forward, and sways as though about to fall. “ I can see no more,” she says slowly, “ a mist has arisen, my eyes, can not pierce it. I pray thee, let me rest.”

Alric, white to the lips, made with precision, a series of passes, before the fixed glassy eyes. His strong breast heaved, the muscles of his brawny arms stood out, and drops of sweat beaded his brow. With a deep sigh, the lips of the girl began to move, and she said: “ I see the lips of the high priest quiver, there are tears in his God-like eyes, and he has laid two trembling hands upon Hatsu’s head.

“ ‘ My sister’s child,’ he is saying, ‘ gather my

Hatsu

words and garner them deep in your heart, for you alone I live, for you—if need be—I die.'

" 'To the Idiot you must plight a solemn troth; but listen, Tothmes the Second, has been taken from his mother's side. Never will she speak word to him more, for ere this, by my command she has entered one of the nunneries, set apart for holy women, who night and day, for the enduring glory of Osirus, keep the lamps, filled with sacred oil, and tend the temple fires. Princess, thou shall make marriage vow to Tothmes; but he shall be safe kept, by one to whom I would trust *my life, my all*, a man who is honor's self! Whose every thought is known to me, as mine to him, in the hands and under the guidance of Alric, captain of the King's guards, I place the so-called *King*.' "

A great sob broke from Alric's throat, and he made a movement, as though to break the trance, but the action was so rapid as to almost be lost sight of in the look of intense resolve the look of indomitable will that took its place.

" 'If,' went on Miriam, 'Tothmes the Second die, and Tothmes the Third ascend the throne, thou shalt still, be queen, for over Tothmes the Third, does Alric hold an influence that is plastic as meal, and as strong as death. Aye, Hatsu, while I live, and while Alric lives thou shalt reign in Egypt. Aye, I swear it! ' "

Hatsu

At the echo of his words, which are uttered in a voice loud and clear, there comes a clash of brazen instruments of music, and the ear catches the cries, and the moans, and the twitter, and the coos of the sacred beasts and birds in the great temple beyond.

Now the temple door creaks on its hinges! and there comes, the slow muffled droning notes, of a myriad voices, men's, and women's, and the voices of youths and maidens.

Hatsu has again risen to her feet, her eyes are bright, a red rose glows in each cheek, and the great Zelas has bent and kissed her upon her brow.

He is calling the doves that have been fluttering about the apartment. They come at his bidding, and he places them upon Hatsu's shoulders; and upon her outstretched arms.

Into her hand he has put a great bunch of heliotrope, and now he sprinkles a strong elixir of catnip over the hem of the Princess' gown, and upon her sandalled feet.

“Go,’ he says, “and stand before the people.” And opening the curtains a little way, he thrusts her forth! and as the silken folds fall back, behind her, the people hear the voice! that makes all men, high or low, rich, or poor, simple, or wise, tremble! the voice of the awful invisible High Priest Zelas, calling to them:

Hatsu

“Behold your Queen! Hatsu, beloved of Osirus, dear to all the Gods, Hatsu, the Queen!”

And there she stands, so young, so fair, so dove encircled! and all about her are fawning the sacred cats licking her sandalled feet, and the hem of her garment, and the people are crying out as with one voice:

“ALL HAIL TO OUR GODDESS, QUEEN HATSU!! ALL HAIL !! AMEN AND AMEN!!”

Hatsu

CHAPTER VI.

As Miriam uttered the last words, Alric replaced the glass disk that he had been holding, in the bosom of his toga, he dropped his raised hands, and the Israelite closed her eyes, and her head fell upon her breast and she slept.

Then Alric folded his arms and looked at the girl.

“I would,” he said softly, as to himself, “that you could know, sweet Miriam, that there is a something within me, crying ‘*Shame*, upon this power I wield;’ but the necessity is great, and fate has made you the medium by which I may gain my end. I have sought Egypt for a subject upon whom I might yield perfect illusory impression, an impression conveyed by hypnotic suggestion to make me master of the actions, and spoken words of another, who is the next link in the human chain to this, my subject.

“Oh, that this occult science, were less feebly understood in my day! Oh, that I may be re-born into that to come in the world’s history, when this power shall be truly a subjective phenomena! a servant of man! when it shall, in its three stages of lethargy, somnambulism, and catalepsy, be used for the good of mankind in the arts of medicine and

Hatsu

surgery, to a time when the priest physician, who believes in cure through faith, the priest physician who believes in cure through the cast-off garments of saints, or the charms of philtre and prayer wheel, shall be swept away, with the chaff and the dross! A time when the priest physician shall be the scientist, who can understand the harmony of the unseen, and apply it to the daily and hourly life conditions, and needs.

“How far,—now having found my medium—shall I be able to use her?

“I must take this woman into my own life. If she were any other than the property of the Princess, my gold and influence could buy her, as it is I must ask her from Hatsu. Not in the marriage of a master to a concubine, but through all the sacred Egyptian rights of vow and ring. Yes, I shall wed you, Miriam, and you will love me, and in the fullness of time you will bear me a son. Aye, carry it under your heart, and bring it forth unconscious of your motherhood. For I will keep you in entrancement through those days and safe hid from all eyes save Hatsu’s and my own, and when the time has been accomplished Hatsu shall take the child, and holding it before the people, proclaim it her son and heir!

“That Zelas is true to me, I now know, beyond all doubt. Zelas, Hatsu’s uncle! Of what sad cominglings are we made! my soul and heart are crying

Hatsu

out in pity, and yet my mortal mind, my scholar's questioning, urges me on——”

But—he pauses—his quick ear detects a footstep—and looking up he sees coming slowly toward him the Princess.

She walks with her lithe young body held erect, as though the generations of poising the urn upon the shoulder, had made a graceful carriage of the body, an Egyptian woman's distinguishing characteristic.

As she draws still nearer, Alric kneels, and with bowed head awaits her command, “to rise.”

“Faithful Friend,” said the sweet low voice “rejoice with me, my mission has prospered, on the morrow I go out of this city of sorrow, to meet, and to greet my sovereign lord, the King; my husband, that is to be.”

Alric took the hem of the Princess' robe, and touched it to his lips.

“All hail sovereign Queen!” he said softly. “Egypt's sun by day, her moon by night.”

It was merciful, that he could not see the look of hungry, wistful woman's love, that she bent upon him, kneeling there; but he *could* hear, the quick fluttering breaths. He *could see* the jewelled hands, held tight against her beating heart.

“My queen,” he said, “here among your sacred dead. I give my life, to your service.”

He had risen and they were looking into each

Hatsu

other's faces; then, as if recalling, Miriam for the first time, the princess with anxious eyes sought her maid, and seeming in one glance, to realize what Alric had done, her pale face flushed, and her gray eyes showed angry light.

"How dare you trifle, with that which is most precious to me!" she said.

"Quick undo the spell that binds her! Miriam! sister! Hatsu calls! Awake!"

But Miriam slept on, and something in the unbroken silence of the man beside her, made Hatsu turn imploringly to him.

"Surely my lord," she said. "You who know how dear Miriam is to me, can not hurt or wrong me through her! surely you know, that should this wanton act of yours, ever come to her, with the added knowledge, that I did not reprove you most severely, Miriam would turn from me, in scorn preferring *torture* and *death*, to serving so false and thankless a mistress."

"My Princess listen! No idle impulse has led to this unnatural slumber, in which you find Miriam, it has been induced, that I might gain the one chance, the only chance perhaps in our present life, to speak with you alone."

"You are bold my lord!"

"Aye but not so bold, as to do aught but prove to you my loyalty. 'Tis true it is but seldom, oh

Hatsu

gracious bride of Tothmes the Second, that a subject forces upon the ear of his sovereign queen, his personal confidence and seeks the aid of the throne itself, to further his selfish aims, and ambitions! yet I Alric, venture into this untrodden path, and ask your interest, and may hap (since you have a gentle heart) your sympathy. Know then future queen, that at the court of Tothmes the Second—and very close to his throne—*my soul lives*, for it is there, the only woman I have ever loved, shall abide.

“ She is by birth and station, so far above me, that to love her, is like loving a star in heaven! but oh queen (that is to be) such love as mine knows no repining, because the object of its worship is beyond mortal possession! love such as mine, finds only joy in the thought that eons of what we call time, may stretch out, before I can take unto myself this other self but while I wait I can serve.

“ Listen! In and about the court of Tothmes the Second, lurk unnumbered dangers, for my *love*. All that I crave at the *queen's* hands, is the power, to stand her sentinel, to guard her night, and day, day, and night, so long as my time on the earth continues.”

He ceased to speak, and stood in respectful attitude, awaiting her reply.

“ Love, that is faithful, pure, and true, is a gift from the Gods, my lord,” she said. “ And the woman that calls forth this affection (who e'er she

Hatsu

be) should feel that nothing earth or heaven could give, could crown her with more *honor* or more *glory*, aye, for love like this she should gladly renounce all else; speak on my lord."

"My princess, there is but one way, *through*, and by *which*, I may serve my love, there is but one way in which I can guard her, and it comes through a gift from you to me. On the day in which you wed yonder *great*, and sainted *King*, give me as *wife* not as *slave*, but as free woman *Miriam*."

With a cry the Princess, all unmindful of past, and future, with no thought of Queenship, or of station, flung her arms about the neck of the man, and nestled close to him so that her warm lips touched his brown throat.

"Not that!" she moaned, "not that! Ask from me any other woman high, or low, rich, or poor, bound, or free! and she is yours but not *Miriam*!"

"I have loved her, and she has loved me, and she *knows* my soul, she has read my most sacred thoughts. If," (she cried looking up into his face) "if I thought, that *she* had been false to me, if I thought, that *she* had *dared* to love *you*! if I thought that you loved her, I would kill her as she sleeps, and then thrust the wet blade, into my own heart."

He took the girl's arms from about his neck, and laid her head upon his breast. He drew her close to him, and bent down and kissed her lips—he said words

Hatsu

to her that only complete possession justifies, and she answered with the silence of acceptance, the silence of unspoken gladness. How long they stood thus, locked in each others' arms, they never knew, for time and place are not spiritual attributes, and they had been lifted above the finite. It was Miriam stirring in her sleep, that came to be the Angel with the Sword, to drive them out, of their Eden! and the woman, wrapped her naked heart, in a mantle of crimson blushes, and the man rudely thrust away the light frail form, and fled to Miriam's side, and by a few passes kept back *still—a little longer*—her returning consciousness.

Hatsu was the first to speak.

“ My lord,” she said quietly, “ ask your gift at my hands, and she shall be thine.”

Hatsu

CHAPTER VII.

Miriam had begun to stir, she raised her head, opened her eyes, and rubbed them sleepily as a child does in the early morning; then, she looked up, and saw Alric standing beside her.

“ You were saying to me, my lord, ‘ I vow to be loyal to Hatsu;’ but, we were both standing!” she looked perplexed, then troubled; “ did I swoon, my lord? ”

Alric laid one of his hands, with the freedom of a free man on the beautiful shoulder of the slave, with his other arm he drew her to him. With a mighty effort, she loosed herself from his hold, her face deadly pale, her nostrils distended.

“ My lord ” she said slowly “ do not lay so much as the tip of your finger upon me! ”

“ As you will,” he said, shrugging his shoulders; “ but in answer to your question, Miriam, you did not swoon, but fell asleep here, alone with me! it will not be the last time my pretty one, that this shall befall you, for I am to receive you as wife, from our princess on the day in which she weds her brother the king.”

Miriam said no word, she only looked at him as though she strove to read his soul.

Hatsu

“ My lord,” she said at last, “ the Princess will *never* grant this request, she knows full well that in all this land, none is so faithful as her Miriam; she knows that I have almost ceased to mourn the captivity of my people, because she is so dear to my heart. My lord, I shall be no wife to you, I am a slave, and it ill becomes me to say *nay* to one so high in authority, but my lord it can not be because I——”

Alric had stepped close to her. “ I do not care for your *why's*, and *wherefores*” he said haughtily “ it is because you *are* so loyal, to the Princess, it is because I am bound body and soul to her service, that you *must come to me*. Thus only can the queen be sure to keep you beside her, enemies might, spirit away an Israelitish bond-woman; but who is *there* that would *touch* the *free wife* of Alric, the beloved and adopted son of Zelas, the great high priest. So there is nothing but your death, that can prevent this union of ours, and I scarcely think your aversion to me, can be so great, as for you to take that road to balk my wishes.” A ring of command sounded in his voice as he added “ Girl, I come of a race who, when they woo a maid, win her! a few days hence, with ring bell and pomgranate, will I wed *you* and in my city house, and on my estates amid the lake country you will reign a free woman, when your duties upon the Princess permit of your absence from service upon Her Highness.”

Hatsu

“I am a slave,” answered Miriam, “and it ill becomes me to say aught, to the man, that has power to take me out of bondage, and make me free. I do not lack in gratitude to you my lord, and for the Princess, I would gladly lay down my *life*, only I *fancied* I——”

“Again I bid you pause” interrupted Alric; “telling one’s thoughts, is not often wise. Accept thou that which the *Gods provide*, Miriam; not troubling much. You are to be mine! and knowing this, be content; but, for your enduring comfort let me repeat, that this marriage of ours only cements your nearness to the woman that you adore,—and who adores you—I am to be the constant companion of the King; you of the Queen.”

“The King!” again Miriam’s eyes searched his face “then after all, it is to be, this dreadful *wedding!* that shall mate beauty to the beast!”

For answer Alric pointed to the Princess, who now appeared at the turning of the road close at hand, and smiling hastened toward them.

There were tears glittering in the soft dark eyes of Hatsu, as she drew Miriam to her breast and kissed her brow.

“My sister,” she said, “those that rule the destinies of Egypt, have taken knowledge of Miriam the Israelite, and knowing that she is without spot or blemish, pure as the whitest flower, guileless as the

Hatsu

newborn child, they bid Miriam *live* in unquestioning submission, the life that is pointed out to her by Hatsu, and Alric; and in some future state where love and ambition mean the highest, and the best, then may Hatsu and Alric open wide their souls and lay the *secret* burden of motive and purpose at Miriam's feet, and may she find it in her heart to forgive them, and love them still.

“ I go dear Miriam, from hence, on the morrow, to meet and to wed my lord; and now the hour being late let us hasten back to the palace, that we may be ready for our journey.

Hatsu

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Some force, that is resistless, doth command me to on this night, take pen and papyrus page, and write upon it, much that fills my mind. I seem impelled to speak words concerning the lives of those among whom destiny has placed me. Keen as my memory is to-day, time will dull it, and thereby cause me to lose my hold upon some of the threads, that are useful to me, in solving the enigma of men, and the motives that govern them.

“ I am possessed of a series of hieroglyphics, whose meaning is known but to a few wise men in the civilized world; so I may safely speak upon this page, and first I choose to describe myself.

“ I was born—a posthumous child—in the house of my paternal grandsire, he was one of the most learned of Syria’s priesthood; a man who had lived so much, and so long in an atmosphere of spiritual conditions, that he scarcely seemed of earth.

“ His food consisted of a few herbs, and roots, he drank naught save water, which he bent down to receive with his lips from the spring itself.

“ Of my father I know little; my mother was a gentle inoffensive soul; one of those negative crea-

Hatsu

tions, that pass through a state of being, making it neither better nor worse for the impress.

“I was born in the spring time, and at the evening hour—when twilight goes to meet the night.

“A strange phenomenon was taking place! Upon our land of mildest and balmiest clime had come a bitter cold, and a white frozen rain poured from the sky and covered the ground.

“Scarce had I uttered my first wail, than the mid-wife heard close beside me, the warbling of an unseen bird, and all about me (while it continued to sing) there was a nimbus of light, bright and star like.

“This condition, or occurrence, was repeated for several days at the same hour, and for the same space of time, and my grandsire who was present, after the first demonstration, prophesied that I should be able to control to my will, the destinies of all with whom I came in contact, so long as mind, governed my decisions, and not sentiment; he said that my danger would lay in the power that two women should possess over me.

“When I had arrived at an age to permit of instruction, my grandsire carried me away from the city and we abode many days in the desert.

“So keen was my sense of the occult, that it took but little space of time, for me to grasp, all that he had to teach, and when I questioned why it was, that

Hatsu

what had taken him seventy years to acquire, came to me in as many days, he made answer in these words:

“ ‘ Know oh Alric—beloved of my soul—that thy form alone is mortal, all thy senses are quickened by the spirit. Love and hate, joy, and sorrow, shall not touch thee. All this, did I knew before I saw thy face, while still thy mother cherished thee beneath her heart.’

“ Then my grandsire told me he had been warned in a dream, that he was soon to be called to lay aside the garment of the flesh, for a robe of light—that he was to proceed to a higher circle of doing, and being, and, it had been given him to prophesy to me, that Tothmes the First the great King of Egypt, would shortly arrive in Syria, that he should be drawn to me by chords of love, and fatherly affection, that he should ask me, of the King, and of my grandsire, promising I should be reared as his own son, and even taking his kingly oath, that upon my arrival at manhood’s time, I should, under the order of the great high Priest Zelas, be invested with power as an officer in the King of Egypt’s army.

“ And even so it came to be. I Alric lived beside the good King, and sat at the feet of Zelas, the high Priest, and learned of him. He,—Zelas—taught me priestly law, and I in return taught him to love me as a son.

Hatsu

“ The two princes, the Idiot (who is King to-day) and the scholar (who shall be King in some to-morrow) I hold in my thrall! and Hatsu what shall I say of the Princess? Is she one of the women, of whom my grandsire spoke? and what of Miriam?

“ Only time shall tell.”

End of Part First.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

Eighteen times has the year been born, grown old, and died, since in the vaulted sarcophagus, in the city of Abydos Hatsu, Miriam, and Alric, stood and spoke with one another.

In the great scrolls that chronicled the history of Egypt's national life, one can read how after leaving the city of Abydos, with her retinue, the princess journeyed to the royal city, where to meet her, reposing in a golden chariot, came King Tothmes the Second.

You will read how the Princess alighting from her chariot, went on foot, to the King, then, kneeling upon the earth kissed with her red lips, his sandalled feet and the hem of his robe.

That, when she then arose, she was so wan, that those who beheld her feared lest death would snatch her from her bridegroom's arms!

You will read, how the mighty sovereign Tothmes the Second, recognizing in Hatsu, his long absent sister, clapped his hands, and laughed for joy, and then of how the trumpets pealed! and the bells rang out!

Hatsu

You will read that the wedding day dawned, and that great was the splendor of the raiment where-with all the court were decked, of how the High Priest Zelas stood for the first time before the people and because of the exceeding glory, and brightness of his presence how some were stricken *blind* and some fell *dead*.

You will read how peace and prosperity filled the land how all industries flourished. How the sainted king, and his sister, the queen, lived in perfect happiness. Their only sorrow being, that no child came to them.

And how at last, after many years, the prayers of the faithful and holy ones, were answered. For Queen Hatsu walked upon the upper court of her palace holding out to the people her hour old, son.

You will read of the joy with which Egypt welcomed this child and then it will be seen that the little Prince grew and throve and was his father's constant playmate and companion.

You will read how all that pertained to the dealings with foreign nations was entrusted to Alric, Mizram's great general. And how in the campaigns into Punt, and the far regions beyond, the Queen, Hatsu, led the Army, fighting like a man in the field, and sharing the brunt of war with her soldiers. Thus was it, until the time of which we now shall speak.

Hatsu

CHAPTER II.

The city residence of Alric, general in command of Their Majesties forces, was within the palace enclosure.

The house was two stories in height, the ground being used for the servants' quarters, offices, store-rooms, and the like, while the upper floor, was divided into commodious apartments and the flat top roof covered with linen awnings, forming a luxurious roof garden, where the master, his family and friends, were wont to spend their waking hours after sunset, for in Egypt the storms are so infrequent, that only once or twice in a hundred years is there any down pouring.

The structure of the house, was of burnt brick, and built in the form of a quadrangle. In the center was a court, laid out in walks that were bright with beds of flowers, and foliage plants, all glistening with the spray, thrown upon them by innumerable fountains. There too, were tanks full of brilliant colored, swiftly darting fish, and pools where the Lotus blossoms, (flower and leaf,) grew and throng casting a penetrating sweetness upon the air.

The stairway (as in all Egyptian mansions) was upon the outer side of the building, the floors were

Hatsu

of some composite material and formed into squares of red and blue checker work, over which were laid rugs of white fur and large mats of colored camel's hair. About the rooms were scattered chairs, and divans, and tables of exquisite workmanship, the woods wonderfully polished and inlaid with gold and precious stones. And the chairs and lounges were cushioned and upholstered in rich silken stuffs.

In the dining hall stood a huge sandal wood side-board not at all unlike in its fashioning, those used in houses a century ago and on this side-board were ranged golden flagons holding choice wines and cordials, golden filigree baskets, filled with fruits and flowers, golden goblets, and loving cups, golden ewers (or finger bowls) and delicate pottery; and there too, were to be found knives, and forks, and spoons.

In this room were many little round tables covered with dainty linen cloths of purest white, beautifully embroidered about their edges in representation of roses, ferns, fruits, or berries.

The walls were hung with trophies of the chase (for the Egyptian gentlemen were great hunters—and fishermen too) and in this dining room in the city house of Alric some famous artist had painted on the ceiling allegorical figures representing Pleasure, Plenty, and Hospitality; in this room as in all

Hatsu

the others there was a charcoal stove because during the year there are chilly days in Egypt.

Then there was the Library where on shelf after shelf, lay the papyrus and parchment scrolls holding a wealth of literature the science, history, poetry and fiction of many centuries.

Beyond the Library after passing through a stone court one came to the bath. This was a high ceilinged apartment sweet and cool and fragrant and in its centre was set a deep pool of ever running water. All along the walls of this room were closets in which every article necessary for the bath was to be found. Brushes soft and hard, rough, and smooth, towels, ungents, oils, powders, perfumes and bags of brans and spices. This was not simply a luxury as in Egypt the preservation of health made it necessary to bathe at least five times daily.

Seated at a table in his Library was the General in Chief of the Egyptian army and about him were gathered his staff.

Time had dealt kindly with Alric his clear skin showed no wrinkling, his mouth was still firm, his lips red, his hair (worn in the fashion of his youthful days) was thick and lustrous although it showed the touch of frost here and there, but there was in the stern firm face of the general no reminder of the merry captain of the guards.

“Have you heard my lord,” said one of the offi-

Hatsu

cers leaning forward, "that our King's new ships are exciting the admiration of all foreign nations?"

"Why should they not?" cries another. "Who ever before had ships propelled at the same time by both oars and sails! each ship requiring thirty rowers and seventy sailors to man her?"

"Is it true," asks another, "that an expedition is soon to be sent out to Punt to procure spice trees for our Botanical gardens?"

"Let us hope," adds a handsome fellow, "that the ugly old Queen will not make this an opportunity to pay us another visit! never did I behold such a human monstrosity!"

"But I have later news still," says another, taking as he speaks his cigarette from his lips and watching the smoke curl lazily up.

"Our chancellor of state has by the King's command, ordered that the supply of straw shall no longer be brought to the brick yards hereafter, the Israelites must gather their own straw when the day's stint is over."

A man with a cynical face broke in upon his neighbor's talk. "This is done," he said, "to give these strangers less time for rest, and if possible weaken their bodily force."

"It is true," said another, "that they breed like lice and that the providing of grain and other produce for the consumption of the Israelites, de-

Hatsu

plete the granaries of Mizram at least one half."

"As for their appetites," said Alric smiling, "I will not gainsay that they are a hearty people, and why should they not be hungry? Surely the bread of the laboring man should be sweet, but my dear Belthazur, I can not agree to the Lord Chancellor's dictum as regards prolificness, for my wife Miriam is an Israelite, and no child has blessed our bed lo! these many years."

"I did not know, my lord," said the young officer blushing hotly, "that my Lady Miriam was an Israelite. I am from a distant Nome, and but a few years in the King's service, and so I beg you, pardon me."

"Tut, tut," said the General, smiling kindly upon the young soldier, "the Lady Miriam is an individual Israelite, and we speak of the people, so I pray you go on."

"To me," said another, "it is exasperating to see how humbly, how uncomplainingly these foreigners take every new infliction; if they even murmured, there might be something interesting in it, but by the gods! they say no word and bow lower and lower in quiet humility under each burden."

"And," added another, "go on increasing more rapidly than ever."

"But," said one who had not yet spoken, "none can call them coward or weakling who ever knew

Hatsu

an Israelite to forsake his faith, he may be bound and forced into a bodily submission, but his soul, he keeps loyal and steadfast to the service of his one God, Jehovah."

"Yes," said the cynical man, "had they been less obstinate in their religious beliefs doubtless through their women, Israel could long since have gained freedom and have been allowed to depart, for where can one find such beautiful women or such prudes? Isis should by rights turn them into cats! It would be an easy matter as their claws are already made."

A general laugh followed, and many were the mirthful questions put to the rather confused officer.

"What you say respecting the loyalty of the Israelites for their religion is true," said the General. "The Lady Miriam was a slave to the Princess Hatsu, and by her presented to me as free wife upon the royal wedding day. She hath been in all things loyal and obedient, faithful and true, but she has reared no altar in my home save to the one God, and that altar is within her heart."

"Was the Queen's mother an Israelite?" asks one. "I have heard it so said, because of the young Prince's likeness to that race."

"Nay, nay," answered Alric. "The Queen's mother came from far to the northward, where she told her husband (the King) there fell through many

Hatsu

moons of the year a rain, that was white, and lay like a carpet of purity over the brown earth."

"There were those," says the cynical man, "when the Queen Hatsu appeared upon her balcony, an hour after the birth of her son, with the child in her arms, that did question the truth of her having given Egypt an heir, but they were foreign born and from afar, and did not know that Egyptian women resent with scorn the plaint of child-bed weakness and such dalliance, and so rise at once the pang is spent, to fulfill their housewifely ministrations."

"And, by the way," quoth another, "what ever did become of the boy, the child that the King Tothmes the First bought at the same time as he did Queen Hatsu's mother?"

"That will never be known," said Alric quietly. "It is a secret that the King buried with his own body. There is a tale (I cannot vouch for its truth) that once upon a time, in answer to this same question, one (who was doubtless demented, or addled with wine) did say that the child became in time our great High Priest Zelas, but on the morrow this man was found lying dead and no one doubts that the wrath of Osirus overtook him! but let us leave these unsolvable speculations, and return to the Israelites. I doubt the wisdom of their retention."

"Let me speak to your question most noble General." It was a new voice—the voice of the youngest

Hatsu

son of Tothmes the First, brother to the reigning King.

“We should miss the skilled labor of the Israelites. In a thousand industrial ways they pay amply for their keep.”

Hatsu

CHAPTER III.

Even as he speaks there is a shuffling of feet heard, and into the room led by a beautiful child—a boy of eight years old—comes a something that makes even the strong men present involuntarily shrink, as they all rise and bow low before it.

The creature is robed in white and scarlet, and on his brow there is fitted a crown of gold, glittering with diamonds, and rubies, emeralds and pearls.

His protruding, wandering eyes have a blank stare, his full, wide open, drooling lips are mumbling something, but he has a firm grasp on the child's hand, and the child leads him.

"It is the King," cries a sweet treble voice. "The King, my father, and we have run away from our good Miriam, for we are tired of our clay dolls, are we not, my father?"

"Are we not, my father; are we not, my father?" mumbles the idiot, and then looking into the child's face, he falls into a fit of immoderate laughter and in the midst of it a woman enters. Although long past youth she is as slight as a girl, typically Egyptian in feature and coloring. She has about her something individual and distinctive and she is clad in a costume that is masculine in most of its make-up.

Hatsu

Her upper garment is a tightly-fitting waist, with a full skirt that reaches just to below the knee and made of bright scarlet stuff. Over this she wears a corslet of finely wrought, flexible gold that clings to her slight, beautiful figure like a glove. In lieu of sleeves she is literally covered by bands of diamonds from forearm to wrist. A broad collar of diamonds encircles her throat. Upon her head is a cap, sewn thick with jewels, and her feet and legs are encased in sandals and leggins like those worn by the officers of the Egyptian army.

As she enters the men salute her as their superior officer. She in return lifts one of her small hands to her jeweled cap in token of recognition.

Thus she passes on until she reaches the side of the King, when, laying her hand firmly upon his shoulder, she says some gentle words to him that stay his mirth, that transform him, for his leering grin gives place to a solemn closing of the thick lips over the great wolfish teeth, and, seating himself in a chair he says slowly and distinctly: "Hatsu, the Goddess Queen, will speak my wishes"; but his eyes look longingly at the boy, beside his chair, the sunny-haired boy, whose hand is still clasped within his own—the little Prince, his son, who nestles his golden head against his mother's gown.

"The King," says Queen Hatsu gravely, "the great King Tothmes the Second, my saintly husband,

Hatsu

bids me speak lest the effort of words too much weary his great mind.

"He wishes that among ourselves (as among trusted and bosom friends) we speak fully concerning the Israelites, and that this might be the better accomplished he has called to private audience the two learned men who have of late come out of Midian to plead Israel's cause with Egypt. One of these men has strong claim to the throne's affection, for our late lamented father and King had a twin sister, whom he fondly loved. This sister did take from the Nile's bosom an infant, and yearning toward it as a mother yearns for her child, the Princess made the waif her own and reared him as a prince of the land; great of mind was this adopted son; his play was study, his friends the sages; gentle and good was he, slow to anger and of much compassion, but silent was he because of a faltering in his speech. So grew he into early manhood, then on a sudden he vanished. Egypt knew him no more. 'Tis said the Princess sped his going and being an Israelite he returned to his own. Now he has come again into Egypt and with him is his brother, Aaron, to make plea for the loosing of his people. We would have this matter speedily settled, that we may turn our thoughts upon more important matters, for you will recall that we have sent an embassy to her most gracious highness the Queen of Punt, asking her to

Hatsu

be again our guest, and we must bring her thither in all pomp and honor, and it ill becomes us to make her a witness to the wailings of the Israelites."

She has never let her eyes wander from the face of the King, as she has spoken, nor does she lift them when Alric says: "Gracious Queen and sovereign lady, who is there in Egypt that shall dispute the wisdom of our sainted sovereign, and surely we all know that people everywhere in the land are saying that the man Moses, and his brother, Aaron, come to Mizram vested with more than human power, that shall make Egypt suffer if she refuse to let Israel go."

A voice interrupts Alric. It is the calm, clear voice of the King's brother. "The King," he says haughtily, "is all powerful! His will prevails. He rules Egypt's night as well as Egypt's day. He need not fear harm through the threats of Moses and Aaron. Superstition and ignorant fear have no place with Egypt's King and Egypt's councillors! Let us bid Gethro's son go back to his sheep! let him seek among the Midian hills a weakly race that listens trembling to old housewives' prophecies! Nay, nay, we should be mad to rid ourselves of such skilled workmen. My lord King, speak thou to these foolish ones and say Israel shall abide."

It was Hatsu who replied: "It is well," she said slowly, "that we have one among us so keen

Hatsu

for the welfare and interest of his brother the King and for the little Prince, the King that is to be, and while all the words that thou hast spoken are wise, the King shall, in his own good time, say HIS royal will." It was at this juncture that the child spoke.

"My mother," he said, "how can the Israelites do good work for Egypt when they are being famished and beaten? and why do you, my good uncle, wish to bring suffering upon our dear Miriam, for Miriam is an Israelite? She does not worship the many gods of Egypt! I am the Prince Royal, the great King's only son, and I would make my father say that Israel shall go!"

As the child began his speech the idiot had leaned forward in his chair and a light came into his dull eyes, a something of intelligence, as he replied: "Let Israel go! Let Israel go!"

But what had come to the Queen? Was she for all her soldierly bearing a wilful women? Surely no other motive could have so changed the current of her purpose! surely it was that which made her happening by chance to look into the General's eyes to say:

"Child, child, hold thy peace! It is the great King's will that Israel shall not go, but go on to bitterer bondage, to a more intense servitude." "But, my mother, listen!" cried the child, "he said go, and not go on." It was then Miriam entered and

Hatsu

Hatsu turned wearily to her saying: "Take him hence. His ceaseless prattle disturbs the Monarch's great thought."

It was some power, mightier than man, that made the silent, gentle Miriam answer: "My Queen, fail not to remember, that out of the mouths of babes comes perfect wisdom, God's own truth! Thy son is a prophet! Listen to his plea ere it be too late! for the wrath of Jehovah, when it is kindled, does not quench till His will is done! The wrath of the God of Israel shall ere long darken this land! Hark, ye! has all your years of binding broken our strength? Our children wax strong! our cattle multiply! Listen to wisdom ere it be too late! listen to the great King's counsel! and let Israel go!" Then in the profound stillness, she stretched out her hand to the child, who, disentangling his other hand with much effort from his father (who was only stayed from following in obedience to some whispered words of the Queen), the two departed.

Hatsu

CHAPTER IV.

Then it was that Hatsu spoke. "Bring in the prophets of Israel," she said, "that they may hear the King's decree and so waste no more time in idle hoping."

And into the apartment were ushered two men.

Both were far past middle life. One was small and thin, with pinched features and bright, gray eyes; the other was tall and grandly formed, and both were in the garb of shepherds.

They stood two mute figures before the chair of Tothmes the Second, and although it was the custom of the age to bend low the knee before sovereignty, neither man did aught save to wait his bidding.

It was the Princess Hatsu who addressed them.

"We have bidden you to come hither," she said, "that you might, oh great Poet and Lawgiver of Israel, speak with the freedom of a friend to us, of that, which has brought you back after many years into Egypt."

It was Aaron who spoke. Yet while his sweet, strong voice told the story, the eyes of all were fixed upon the silent lips of Moses.

"Great Queen of Egypt," began Aaron (and all remembered that to the poor idiot he addressed never

Hatsu

a word). “There stands before you on this day, an instrument of the Almighty. One who by the will of the All Powerful, shall in time, rear out of ruins and ashes, out of ignorant, broken-spirited slaves, a great and enduring nation; a people that shall live with the riches of this globe when Egypt is but a faded memory. Of this glory that is to be, Moses is promised no portion, and no place, and being meekest of all men that are upon the face of the earth, he is satisfied to be the humblest servant of his Lord. There is for him no glory but the glory of God. Moses has dwelt always, in spirit, in Egypt. He has never day or night ceased to think upon the bondage of his people. And who knows the purposes of Mizram better than this son of Israel that stands before you. He is the adopted son of Pharaoh’s great daughter. Aye it is from out of the tenderness of his heart for his adopted mother, and his adopted kinsmen, that he has pleaded with the God of Israel to stay His hand, that he might warn Egypt of the woes that shall before long befall her if she still holds Israel in thrall. Therefore he asks, oh gracious Queen, that thou loosen the cords, and open the gates, and bid thy bondsmen depart in peace.”

“Spare thy prayer.” It was the King’s brother that spoke. “We fear not thy one God, so hurl thy threats quickly that we may laugh them to scorn.”

Hatsu

There was no look of anger in the gentle face, and no tone of bitterness in the strong, sweet voice that said:

“Our God hath thus spoken to Moses, His Prophet: ‘Oh thou, who feedest thy flocks beside the green pastures, and the still waters, arise and get thee down into Egypt, and take with thee Aaron, thy brother, that he may speak for thee, and say thou, unto her, who holds the hearts of her people in the hollow of her woman’s hand: “Hear, oh Egypt, harken unto the voice of the God of Israel. Lo! behold! the cry of Israel has reached the Mercy Seat and the wailing must cease.”’ Thus saith the Lord. “Or most surely Egypt shall learn the power of the Most High.”’

“Hark, ye, oh Queen, an army shall fall upon Egypt and devour her substance; its ranks shall be unseen; its warriors shall be called famine, fever, pestilence and death. Take thou our challenge, oh stubborn of heart, for we two standing unarmed, save for our shepherd’s staffs, shall alone abide unharmed in your midst when the will of our God shall be accomplished to the uttermost. Aye, not one hair of our heads shall ye touch for we are the anointed of Heaven. Listen, oh Queen, the princes of this world come to naught! Kingdoms fall and are forgotten, but the glory of the God of Israel remaineth forever. Once, yet again, for the love he bears the

Hatsu

home of his youth, for the land that heard his first cry, does Moses plead: Oh Mizram, loose thy vain pride and let Israel go."

"And who is thy God?" (It was Alric who spoke.) "Show us some sign by which we may be convinced of his power."

Then the silent Moses lifted a small, lithe rod, which he held in one of his hands, and, lo! it was a rod no longer; but a serpent, the enemy of man! And it gazed with hungry eyes and spake with a hissing tongue! Then Alric drew from out his tunic a similar rod and it, too, changed into a scorpion, larger and fiercer than that, which the man Moses had created, and these two accursed objects, viewing each other, forgot man, and engaged in mortal combat the one with the other, and, lo! the serpent of Moses swallowed the serpent of Alric, and so doing, vanished.

With a laugh Alric threw down his wand.

"Thy skill, oh free Israelite," he said, "exceedeth mine. What say you of this power as a test of the God of Israel's might to perform upon Egypt, that which He threatens?"

The Prince had watched with keenest interest and he now replied, rather than the Princess: "No test of foolish magic will move our King from his purpose, believe me. I speak both the will of the King and his sainted Queen, when I say Israel will

Hatsu

abide in Egypt," and as though hushed by a power that she could not baffle, while her heart and soul were filled with protest, Hatsu held her peace.

Then Aaron spoke: "But Israel shall go and Egypt shall open her gates and cry, 'Depart, depart, ere the remnant of us be lost forever.' Listen! In some near at hand day, Nature shall break no law, when she makes this fair land a chaos of misery! Your rivers and lakes shall be like unto blood, and the fish that is in them shall die and the people shall turn away with loathing, though their throats be parched and their thirst be intolerable. Then shall the waters breed frogs, and they shall be tame in their boldness, and go up into the houses, and consume all that there is therein, from the fair hangings on the palace walls, to the dough in the humblest dwellers' kneading troughs, and then if my people be not free, the dust of the land shall become fleas, and lice, and these shall fall upon man and beast and devour their bodies while they yet live, and then if wisdom comes not to thee, oh Egypt, there shall rise swarms of flies that shall buzz and sting without ceasing and a murrain shall come on thy beasts, the cattle and the horses and the camels, the oxen and the sheep, and a boil shall follow, breaking forth with blains upon man and beast! Then upon Egypt a tempest shall fall, whose like was never known—a tempest of hail that shall cut like a sword of fire

Hatsu

that shall kill—of wind that howls, and tears, and destroys; and the hail shall smite the field, and the fire from heaven shall consume the cattle, and every green thing shall die! The trees shall perish! The flax shall be useless for the loom! The barley shall give no yield! Then shall come the locusts, singing a mournful song! They shall cover all things that be left, and then, be ye warned, if thou still vaunt thyself, there shall come a midnight wherein all the first born of the land shall die! The first born of Pharoah that sitteth upon the throne and the first born of the lowliest in the realm! No hearth shall be spared! Listen, oh Queen! give heed to my word, oh councillors! for what the Lord saith that will He surely perform."

It was with the same relentlessness that the Queen made answer:

"Go back, Shepherd Prophets, to your flocks and herds! Your threatenings we do not heed! In the name of King Tothmes the Second of Egypt, I bid you depart, and wish you peace." The great Law-giver felt, as the queen spoke, a hand upon his robe, and looking down beheld it in the grasp of the fingers of the idiot King. And he heard softly, but distinctly, these words: "Let Israel go! Let Israel go!" And it stirred in his grand soul a tender pity.

"Israel shall go," he said gently, "and thy will (which thy people feign to misinterpret) is remem-

Hatsu

bered in love, by the God of all the earth. Egypt shall harden her heart, and the sorrows of her sin shall fall upon her; but when Israel goes out thy soul shall go, too, and, leaving its poor tenement of clay, will inherit a better kingdom, wherein our God shall give thee light."

Hatsu

CHAPTER V.

In one of the summer houses—or arbors—of the King's garden, Miriam sat that day as the sun went down, her eyes fixed upon the forms of the King, and the little Prince, his son, who were busily at play with a mimic squadron in one of the smaller tanks or pools. So intent was her watching that she was startled to find the King's brother standing beside her and mindful of her duty to royalty she arose.

“Nay, nay, my lady,” said the prince, “do not rise to do me reverence! It is more meet that I should bend to thee.” Miriam paid little heed to these words. She had been reared amid the meaningless flattery of the court, but she nevertheless resumed her seat, and was not surprised to have the Prince take the vacant place beside her. “It is to be regretted, my lady,” he said, “that you did not linger in the council chamber to-day and hear the great prophet speak Egypt's doom! Your Moses (through the lips of Aaron his brother) bids us prepare for many calamities, and at Nature's door he lays them all! wind, rain, hail, a devouring insect horde, and then, if we hold Israel still, the grim

Hatsu

spectre called Death will make a gleaning of Mizram's first born."

"All this have I heard from the Queen, my lord," replied Miriam quietly. "And it will surely befall, as he has said, and, when it is accomplished, and Israel goes out, you will be the King." The Prince drew nearer to Miriam. "And where wilt thou be in that day?" he said slowly, and his eyes looked into hers with something that had a mingled motive (for Miriam was too pure of soul to inspire only carnal love, and for Miriam the Prince had felt an absorbing passion lo, these many years). "Nay," she answered. "It matters not to me, save that I wish thee well, and pray that thy reign may be one of peace, and prosperity, to Egypt." "And where wilt thou be, when Tothmes is dead and I am King?" he said. "Sire," she made answer, "I am an Israelite. When my people go hence I shall not be left in Egypt." "But the child," he said, and as he uttered the word it seemed as though he sought through the word to read her inmost soul. "The child, can you bear to part from him?" She laid her hand upon her heart and paled as though his words had the hurt of a blow; but she lifted her sweet, untroubled eyes to his face and said: "I, too, have thought of this parting from the child, but did Aaron not tell you, that when you sit upon the throne, the little Prince shall be no more. Nay,"

Hatsu

she said, as though speaking to herself, "I will not leave him in Egypt, I will not leave him, until God takes him."

A madness seemed to sweep over the Prince. He drew closer to Miriam's side and whispered: "You shall not go hence, life of my life, soul of my soul. I have prayed to all the gods that the famine, and the fever, the pestilence, and the thirst may come! That yonder gibbering idiot, yonder fatherless child, may give up the ghost; that Hatsu may fall dead, and you alone be spared. Then may Israel go, if you, beloved, remain, my queen, sharing my throne. You who since my earliest boyhood have reigned supreme in my soul. I will be so tender to you, so much your slave, that ere I die you will love me, and in your love my highest desire will be fulfilled. Listen, what I tell you is true. Yonder Prince is but a Prince in name! He has no claim of heirship to the throne! He is a nameless waif, his parentage unknown; but for your sake, for your love, I would set him before the people, and call him King. And so, sweet one, go not out with Israel, but abide in Mizram, for the child's sake." As he still speaks she puts her hand upon her heart, then she lays her head back against the wall of the summer house, and to his horror, life seems departing from her! She grows ghastly to look upon. Terror stricken, conscience

Hatsu

smitten (for he loves her better than himself) he turns and flees.

Scarcely have his feet gained a safe retreat, when Alric enters the arbor. "It is well," he mutters as he catches sight of Miriam. "I came none too soon! I felt some poisonous thing was hovering too near my white rose." He came to her side and made mystic signs, and called her by the name of "Gweneth." She opened her eyes. "What wouldest thou, master," she said. "Where art thou?" he asked.

"Here beside thee, master, but oh, so longing for rest. This journey through the flesh has been a bitter one. I have come e'en close to my beloved, and yet another has gained his love. It is hard to serve without reward. I pray you, my master, let me begone!"

With a tenderness drawn from him, against judgment, the man Alric knelt beside her, and kissed her white hand. "Sweet one," he said, "the journey is nearly over. Would that I might tell thee what thou art become to me. I dare not, lest I lose my power over the thoughts and actions of the many, through the knowledge that you alone can impart. Yes, sweet soul, thy mission is all but ended in Egypt, as is also that of thy brave sister soul. So go forth again Gweneth, and come not as twain to me in any eon of rolling time, but wait, until as one soul, I can meet and claim you,

Hatsu

forever and forever. But speak, oh Gweneth, who went from thee?"

"It was the Prince, the King's brother. Long has he loved Miriam, the Israelite; long has he worshipped her from afar; and to-day he did speak to her of his hopes, when Egypt held out its crown to him."

"And," said Alric slowly, "Egypt will soon call him King. But haste to speak to me of other things, dear spirit, for it is thy last service. Reveal to me the close at hand story of Egypt."

A sigh escaped the white lips ere she said softly: "There will be an exodus of many besides the Israelites. The idiot King, the fair young Prince, Zelas the High Priest, Hatsu and Miriam shall go on, and Alric alone shall be left to abide in the land of his father, lo, these many years. Zelas and Hatsu shall be caught up in a chariot of fire, and the King and the Prince shall die, to ransom Israel, and in that same hour a merciful shaft from heaven shall set Miriam free." She stretched out her arms and cried: "I pray thee, good master, let me go! for I am weary."

With a sigh Alric arose. "It will be as thou sayest, sweet one," he said, "our day is over, and another night of short oblivion draws near, for the many." Then he made some passes above her, calling: "Wake, Miriam, awake!" The color came

Hatsu

stealing back into her cheeks and lips, and she looked up to Alric with a perplexed smile. "I am such a sleepy one," she said, "and such a dreamer of dreams! Listen, my lord, as I sat me here watching the King and the little Prince at their play, I fell asleep and had such a strange vision. I thought that the King's brother came to this arbor, and talked to me as would a lover. It was an idle, idle dream." And then she rose and (as a mother might) drew the head of Alric down to her breast and kissed him.

CHAPTER VI.

And now the prophecy had been fulfilled. The once fair land lay a barren waste. Egypt so long in thrall to her myriad gods, was helpless, speechless, and prayerless, before the might of the ONE Jehovah. Hope was dead, courage had fled, and naught seemed left but a remnant of stubborn will in which to still cry out: "Israel shall not go."

The hour had come in which the last curse was to fall. Scarce had the sun gone down when the idiot King gave up the ghost, and through all the realm there arose a wailing cry: "Oh, my first born; oh, my son, my son!"

Hatsu

CHAPTER VII.

In an upper room in the palace lay the little Prince. Through the open casement the moon looked in. Kneeling beside him was Miriam, her face buried in her hands, her body shaken by sobs. The child was speaking. "Dear Miriam," he said, "do not bid me linger in this parched land. I fain would go to the better country; one I love waits for me there. Didn't thou not tell me, that when Israel's great prophet stood to warn Egypt, that he did bless my father, the King, and promise to him a place in the heaven of heavens? Dear Miriam, the King has gone out of Egypt. Hark! how the heralds cry it through the streets! 'The King is dead,' they say. 'Long live the King.' I cannot linger here, I must go to him. He will lose his way; he could not find the golden gates; he does not know the angels; I led him here, and I must lead him there. Nay, sweet nurse, do not weep! I fain would go! Hark! he calls me. My father have but patience for a little while! I come." And then the child fell, panting, back among his pillows.

Rising from her knees Miriam stood for one moment looking down upon him, then, all unnoticed, in the wild confusion of grief that was sweeping

Hatsu

like a flood through every home in the city, she made her way out of the palace, and the gates, to the plain beyond, where in a rude hut dwelt the prophet Moses and his brother, Aaron, waiting until the time should come for them to guide Israel out of Egypt. With no asking for admittance, Miriam entered the hut, and seeing Aaron within, she hastened to throw herself at his feet. "Oh, my lord," she cried, "I come to beg of thee, in the name of Jehovah, take all Egypt, but spare the life of Hatsu's son, the little Prince! No dearer could he be to me, my lord, had I carried him for nine long moons under my heart, no dearer had I known the pangs that bring the joyous gift to motherhood. My lord, take me, an unworthy daughter of Israel, aye, blot out my soul for all eternity, but spare the child!"

Upon her bowed head the prophet laid a gentle hand.

"Miriam, daughter of Abram," he said, "no more faithful child hath God of Israel than thou. Thy human form has been used, as a shield, by those to whom thou hast given thy pure love; but they have had no power to touch thy white soul. It is not the will of the 'All-Wise' that thine eyes should see, on this earth, that which has been hidden from thee. But be comforted, for thy God is a God of Mercy, and so let the child go in peace. The little one that thou hast reared, to say thy prayers, and

Hatsu

call upon the Blessed One of Israel, shall see no evil days, aye, ere thy returning feet shall cross the threshold of the city gates the child shall die, and thou shalt quickly follow him."

With a moan of hopeless agony, Miriam arose. She said no word of parting. She turned and made her way back across the barren moonlit plain. A cloud now covered the moon, and a strange low-voiced wind arose that was like unto a warning cry; but Miriam heeded naught; she hurried on repeating through her white lips: "God is greater than Moses! God is greater than Aaron! God notes the fall of the bird from its nest, and He will hear my prayer! He will hear! Oh, my Father in Heaven, spare the child, spare the child!"

There comes to some, in every age of time, the actual power of reaching the source of light. It is to the mother that this awful privilege is oftenest granted. When in her supreme agony of love she spans all space and reaches the eternal to beg the life of her child.

Suddenly Miriam stood still, her cry ceased and in a quiet voice she spake to the great silence:

"What is it that Thou sayest to my soul? Aye, I know the words, 'Be strong and of good courage; fear not, for it is the Lord that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee or forsake thee.' Yea, they are sweet and comforting words! What is Thy

Hatsu

name, Thou that art clothed in light?" Then she stretched forth her hands, a smile came to her lips. "Thou art an angel of the Lord," she cried. "Aye, spirit, I will lean upon thy breast and thou shalt lead me through the gates."

And the prophet Aaron, watching Miriam from his doorway (for the moon had come out of hiding and again the parched plain was as bright as at mid-day) lifted up his voice and said: "Keep Thy strong arm about her, oh Merciful One; rest her weary head upon thy loving, tender breast, for Thou, too, in Thy time of earthly sojourn, knew the yearning of the Mother heart. Oh, thou shining one, thou, too, wert once like her, a sorrowing woman, and thy God, and Miriam's God, hath sent thee to lead her through the gate."

Hatsu

CHAPTER VIII.

The low muttering had grown to louder tone, the wind came in mad gusts. There were vivid ribbons of fire, and great reverberating crashes of thunder.

Beside the little bed on which lay the dead child knelt Miriam, and at the foot of the couch stood the Queen and Alric. It would have been hard to tell which of the two faces (the man's or the woman's) showed the less of fear or sorrow. The ravages of pestilence, famine and fever had left them unmoved and the present visitation of death they were meeting in quiet and silence. The great General had no tears to shed for the dead King, or the dead King's little son, and the woman warrior stood dry eyed, gazing upon the fast stiffening body of the child.

To Miriam this calmness meant a pent up agony. So, forgetting her own sorrow, she strove to form words of comfort for the Queen; and as she spoke the darkness grew deeper, and the very air became, as it were shut out, so that not in breaths, but in gasps, did the stifling Egyptians strive to fill their lungs. A silence fell, a great hush came, and in its midst a man crawled into the room and stopped

Hatsu

at the Queen's feet, then he gasped out: "Zelas, the great High Priest, bids thee, oh Queen, and thee, my Lord Alric, to hasten to him. He waits, in the secret grotto, under the Sphinx," As he uttered the last word, he fell dead. It was at this instant that an awful flood of light filled the room. In its glory one saw that Miriam, with an ecstatic smile, arose for an instant, stretched her arms upward, and fell lifeless across the body of the little Prince.

Then the storm burst, and the blessed rain fell, and the curse had been lifted. * * *

When the storm was over, Israel went out of Egypt, and Tothmes the Third (a wiser and a better man for this awful visitation) began with speed to renew, rebuild, and re-create Egypt, to a higher place among the nations of the earth.

For centuries it was believed, by the most learned, that on that fateful night, Hatsu, Alric and Zelas were carried by Osirus, into his own *kingdom*, for no mortal eye ever beheld them more, living or dead; neither did any see them depart. * * *

In Syria there dwelt, for many years, a wise man. He came from none knew whither, and as he was *great* in *sorcery*, none dared provoke his wrath by questionings. He left naught upon his death, but a scroll on which were written characters so strange that none could find their *meaning*. So the baffled scholars of each generation bequeathed

Hatsu

it to the next and thus the scroll was treasured through much time, until at last, one was born, who said: "I can read what is written therein," and when he read the wise men of his day laughed him to scorn, and cried out that he was mad. "To think," they said, "that the world has been treasuring this scroll for centuries, only to be rewarded with what is at best an unfinished and impossible love tale."

Here is what the scholar found written upon the parchment:

Hatsu

CHAPTER IX.

“The shadows of life are gathering thick and fast, and my long day on earth is drawing to its close, and I fain would write, ere it be too late, that which the world should know from me, when the time is ripe for its revealing.

“On the night of the fulfillment of the last curse, as the Queen and I stood by the bed whereon lay my dead child, and while the all unconscious mother, Miriam, strove to comfort the Queen, Hatsu and I were summoned to attend upon Zelas the High Priest. The place to which he called us was a subterranean grotto, under the great Sphinx, a secret retreat known to but a few in all the kingdom, and where had been long established that which was called, by the initiated, ‘the chamber of perfect peace.’ This place was so hidden away by a labyrinth of stairs and passages that, without the key to its winding ways, he who entered would be hopelessly lost. This ‘chamber of rest’ was hewn out of solid rock, and held two cradles, in which through many generations a chosen number of the greatest and the best had been rocked to a final sleep. It was a mad night. Egypt in all her history had known no such warring of the elements, but the Queen

Hatsu

and I, heedless of all else, but the bidding of Zelas, made our way out of the palace, and through the plague-ridden city. None marked us, as we hurried on. Like two children, hand in hand, we walked, a speechless pair, but true companions in adversity, until we came at length, to the appointed place. Then it was that the Princess spoke to me. 'The storm is fast spending itself,' she said slowly. 'On the morrow the sky will be blue again, and the sun will shine. Israel will depart, and Egypt will lift up her bowed head, and Tothmes, my brother, will reign. It is my will that thou, follow me to the end, that, as I close my eyes, in a last sleep, I may see thy face; for, in spite of warrior fame, in spite of prowess in the chase, I carry a woman's heart, and thou alone have had an altar there! Nay, let me tell thee more, I had rather have lived my lonely empty life, with just the *dream* of what it could have been, as thine honored wife, than to have been given, any other portion, however *blessed*.'

"My soul was stirred by this tenderness. 'Great Queen,' I made answer, 'why must we enter here? the night is dark, and in its gloom, we will leave the city; then in some safe retreat, and under names unknown, we will begin a life of happiness that shall be but the foretaste of innumerable re-unitings in the progression from world to world.' She shook her head sadly, 'Nay,' she said, 'not now, not now,

Hatsu

my plane is higher than thine, and I can not stoop to thee, much and fondly though I love thee; when we can meet as soul equals, we shall *not* part, *believe me*, and so good-bye, and know in some beyond of time, *we shall* meet and *understand*, now *come*.'

" Guided by the Princess, we wended our way to one of the claws of the great sphinx. There, she knelt down, and said some mystic words. A stone slid noiselessly aside, and we entered the opening and found ourselves in a long corridor. The air was pure and sweet, aye, even fragrant, as though perfumed with growing flowers, lights glimmered along the walls, lights created by a subtle power in nature known only to the most learned. With the ease of one who treads a frequented way, the Queen led me, until we came to a door, that opened as the other had done at her bidding, and we stood inside a brilliantly lighted hall, at whose farther end (and built out into the room,) was that which seemed to be a white tomb, with a grated entrance gate. No one was in sight, and the Queen, bidding me be seated and await her further orders, turned into one of the arched door-ways, and disappeared.

" How long I sat thus in solitude, none can tell; at last through the same portal she came back, and with her my master Zelas; both were in the robes of their office; jewels glittered upon them like hoar frost, and there was that in the set faces, that spoke

Hatsu

of the to come. The Queen, said no word; but I felt that her eyes dwelt upon me with a tenderness unspeakable. It was Zelas my master that broke the silence.

“‘Alric, beloved,’ he said, ‘the hour is come, in which we twain must depart. Keep thou a silent tryst, until yon clock shall toll ten times the hour. Then rise, open the wicket gate, and enter without fear to gather that which thou shalt find into the urn I hold; then, with this scroll in thy hand, learn the way to return again, to the world. Day shall scarce have dawned, and the tired nation will be wrapped in a deep sleep; go thou up, and out of Egypt, and with thee, bear the urn and when thou art upon the edge of *Mizram*’s skirt, scatter the ashes, thou hast by thee, to the four winds of heaven. Alric, beloved, adieu; somewhere, souls meet again, *somewhere*.’

“He lifted his grand face upward, and his lips moved as if in prayer;—then the twain turned, and entered through the gate. All was silent, and the unseen bell told the hours, until full ten had come and gone; then I rose, and betook me to the iron gate, opened it, and found myself in a low room that held two white cradles. The cradles were empty, but in the hollow stone basin under each, lay small heaps of white ashes. No trace of fire, no melted gold, no dulled gem was there, no sign by which to tell,

Hatsu

which had been Queen and which High Priest. I stooped and gathered the dust into the urn, took my scroll, and so departed, and in the early dawn (as Zelas had bade me) I went out of Egypt.

“ Years have come and gone since then, so many, that the past of which I write seems like a dream and in my heart, there has come to be a longing, to see once more, the faces of Miriam, and Hatsu, but most of all to hear *again*, the voice of the little child—Miriam’s child and mine.”

THE END.

H a t s u

BY

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